



## The Egyptian Theatre Preservation Association Winter/Spring 2021

### From the Director's Desk by Kara Long

Greetings, from behind the scenes at the Egyptian Theatre. I hope everyone is staying safe and finding new ways to safely socialize with friends and family. At the Egyptian, we have continued our work on restoration projects.

In January we began the first steps of getting an estimate on the cost to level the stage. Currently, the stage is level for about the first 12 feet, then it starts sloping downwards until it reaches the back wall. At that point its about 14 inches lower than at the front!

Before we can fix the stage though, we will be repairing some leaks in the back wall, where there used to be windows that were filled in with concrete. Once we get a solid price on this project, we will work on getting some grants. Thankfully, we have the generous donation from the Kinnaird Family Trust that we can use as grant matching funds.

Even though the theatre is currently closed, we are finding ways to participate in the community. We recently hosted a small group from the Oregon Coast Photographers Association who did a photo shoot in the theatre. Most of them had been in the theatre before but they were delighted at the opportunity to go behind the scenes.

In October, we collaborated with Banner Bank, Farr's Hardware and K-Dock Radio to do **Random Acts of Popcorn**. K-Dock Facebook followers nominated businesses to receive popcorn and we drove to the businesses and surprised them with freshly popped popcorn. If you've had our popcorn, you know it's the best in the county. Banner Bank provided the boxes, Farr's provided the popcorn and K-Dock did the advertising. This gave our dedicated popcorn popping volunteers a chance to do what they love to do – pop fresh popcorn. And boy, did it taste good! K-Dock and I delivered over 1,000 boxes of popcorn to businesses in Bandon, Coquille, Coos Bay, North Bend, and Reedsport.

Thank you for your support. We will get through this together and your Egyptian Theatre will re-open when it's safe to gather again in large groups.



### Finances by Laura Fisher, Bookkeeper

Since mid-March 2020 we have been operating on a shoe string budget with our Executive Director/Theatre Manager, Kara Long, working a little less than ¼ time. One of our highest costs is utilities as we still need to keep the heat on during the winter so the theatre doesn't get musty. Other costs, like insurance and website hosting, need to be paid whether we are open for business or not.

We are happy to say that in addition to the \$5,000 COVID-19 grant we received from the Oregon Community Foundation and mentioned in our last newsletter, we later received other funding help. We received a \$50,694 grant from the Coronavirus Relief Fund and a \$13,333 loan from the SBA Payroll Protection Program. Both can be used to help cover payroll and utilities. The SBA loan is eligible for 100% forgiveness and we want to thank Banner Bank for helping us with the loan application.

From several of our generous members we received donations of nearly \$8,000 towards operations. We appreciate you more than we can say. Your donations have helped cover some of the costs that the other grants could not cover, and we have a little bit still remaining as we head into spring 2021.

## **We've Come a Long Way (but we're not done yet!) by June Willoughby, Secretary**

When I moved to Coos Bay in 1998, the Egyptian was a tri-plex featuring first run movies. I remember being amazed at how cheap they were at \$3.50 because I had come from a town in New York State where first run films were already \$7 or \$7.50. We learned about the annual Christmas Concert our first year here and marveled at the Mighty Wurlitzer – what a treasure!

Now, I know many of you grew up here and remember when movies were a quarter or free if you brought a bread bag (or something like that). So, I don't mean to tell you what you already know, but perhaps to remind you of what a treasure Coos Bay has.

In 2005, the news came out that Coming Attractions wanted to sell the theatre and add on to the complex at Pony Village. That Christmas Concert in 2005, was to be the last and I remember the line wrapped down the block and around the corner as folks waited to get in to what we thought was to be the end of an era.

But instead, a small bunch of people gathered and spearheaded a group that formulated a plan to "Save the Egyptian". The group convinced the City of Coos Bay to buy the building using urban renewal agency dollars. In March of 2006, the group incorporated and the Egyptian Theatre Preservation Association (ETPA) was born as a tax exempt 501(3)(c). The Theatre once again started showing movies in late 2006. They were not first run movies and probably never will be again due to a deed restriction that Coming Attractions threw in at the last minute. But her doors were open and the smell of fresh popcorn filled the air!

In 2007, the balcony theaters were removed and the public was allowed in the balcony once again for the 2007 Christmas concert. In 2010, the 85-year-old Egyptian Theatre was recognized for its unique qualities by being placed on the National Register of Historic Places. (Thank you, Helen Doving!)

Also, in 2010, the City commissioned an engineering study that showed the back wall of the theatre was sinking into the silt and no longer structurally sound (have you ever seen how badly our stage tilts?) Then the Japanese Tsunami hit in March of 2011, and the City closed the Theatre over concerns it was structurally unsafe.

Originally, the engineer's report to repair it had such a big number in it, that no one thought it possible to raise that kind of money. But several experts were brought on board and they saw the possibilities – we didn't need to raise the whole amount all at once – the work could be broken into stages that were manageable and so the fundraising began. Over the next year and a half over \$1,000,000 was raised between grants and contributions! The work was started and in June of 2014, the Theatre reopened, complete with handicap accessible restrooms.

In 2014, before we reopened, a new boiler was installed for heat and some unused cinema quality speakers were discovered and reinstalled. In 2015, we purchased a new (to us) digital projector with a grant we received. It is the best projector on the Oregon Coast. In 2016, the new façade was completed and we also started discussions with Tiffin of Ohio about redoing our stage rigging. In the summer we finished our projector upgrade to 4K resolution and obtained headphones for the hearing impaired. (If you have any hearing issues you should try them! I do frequently.) In 2017, we upgraded to Dolby Sound Surround. Have you seen the woofer on stage? It's HUGE! And Kara is very proud of it.

In 2016, we closed our Farmer's Market Booth and set up a table in front of the Theatre. We opened for tours, gave away a little popcorn and sold souvenirs. And, from noon to one, we had live organ music. Everyone was welcome to bring a sack lunch and relax to the sounds of the Mighty Wurlitzer.

In the summer of 2017, a rope holding one of our stage backdrops broke and the drop fell. These are the antique, hand painted backdrops that hang above the stage and date back to 1925. The ropes were hemp and over time, they rotted. So, we stopped using all of those until such time as

they could be fixed. If you attended any of the Teen Idol Contests over the years, or any live concert, you have probably seen some of them. I didn't even know the backdrops existed until after the theatre was reopened under the ETPA and I took a tour. We did get some grants which allowed us to buy literally miles and miles of rope and cables to work on the rigging. That was started in the summer of 2019, and actually continued during our current closure. Also, during the closure, people have been working behind the scenes to patch the drops themselves where they were ripped or were otherwise damaged over the years.

During 2018, we had to replace some equipment including our ice machine, the printer for the concession stand register, the box office intercom and the sound mixer board. Running a theatre is not cheap! Thanks to the many donations we received we were able to do this without using our capital reserves.

Then there was the roof. During the initial remodel in 2013, the roof over the stage house was replaced but the main auditorium room was not. In 2019 we noticed a few leaks so once again, the ETPA raised grants. I'm very pleased to be able to report that the new roof was finished in the fall of 2020. So, we can be warm and dry and safe in the theatre once again. And, we're in the process of beginning the next big project – getting the stage level.

Over the 6+ years that Kara Long has been with us as our Executive Director, she has experimented with programming to try and figure out what will sell enough seats to keep us solvent and what do people like. She has brought several Film Festivals to the Egyptian and they seem quite popular and are well attended. And, she has discovered that a variety of groups in Coos Bay and North Bend like to rent the theatre for fund raisers. They do well and so do we. And of course, there are a few standalone movies that we can count on to bring in the crowds, like "Elf" and "The Goonies".

COVID, of course, knocked the wind out of our sails just like it has done for the rest of the world. We look forward to the day we can once again be open to support all our wonderful local organizations, the Community Concert Association and the various movie festivals. Sadly, we still do not know when that will be. So, we're hoping that you will all be patient with us and hang in there. We appreciate the faith you have shown us by continuing your memberships and donating to our operations fund.

We missed out on celebrating the Egyptian's 95<sup>th</sup> birthday in November of 2020, so we'll just have to have a Belated Birthday Party when we reopen!



With the single exception of Grauman's Egyptian in L.A. and its location on Hollywood Blvd, **EVERY OTHER EGYPTIAN THEATER EVER BUILT ON THE WEST COAST OF THE UNITED STATES... EVERY ONE HAS BEEN DEMOLISHED.EXCEPT YOURS.** Congratulations, Coos Bay." From a talk by George Kramer, Preservation Consultant, March 7, 2013.

## Additional Rewards for the Gift of Giving

Thank you, thank you to all of you who have renewed your memberships for 2021 and, in many cases, increased your level of giving. It gives those of us on the Board a warm feeling to know that you are behind us and love the Egyptian as much as we do.

You may not be aware of some recent, though probably temporary, changes in the tax law as it applies to cash donations **on your individual tax return**. If you take the standard deduction for 2020, you are allowed a \$300 deduction per **return**. This gets even better for 2021 because if you are filing jointly you can take up to \$600. That's without itemizing! If you itemize for 2020 and/or 2021, you can take even more charitable donations. **Please consult your tax advisor on how to exactly take advantage of this benefit.**

The ETPA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit so any donations made to us, including your memberships, are deductible.

In addition, if you ever think of donating to the Oregon Cultural Trust, your donation to them (up to \$500) can reduce your Oregon tax bill. You must make a donation to an organization they list (and guess what - we're on the list!) Then you must also make a donation to them of the same amount up to \$500. You can give them more, or us more, but the benefit is only up to \$500. For example, if you give \$250 to the ETPA, and \$250 to the Oregon Cultural Trust, you can reduce your tax bill by \$250. It can even result in money back if your tax bill is less than that amount! For more information, please go to <https://culturaltrust.org/get-involved/donate/>

Finally, it might interest you to know that we do receive money quarterly from the Fred Meyers Rewards program and the Smile program at Amazon so your shopping at these two businesses can help us. We received just over \$180 from the Rewards program for 2020 and just over \$200 from Amazon Smile. You must register with both programs. Once you do, just present your Fred Meyers card when checking out and it's automatic for them. For Amazon, just remember to enter the site via the Smile program. If you just go to Amazon.com it won't count. We benefit and it costs you nothing – what a deal!

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**Kara Long, Executive Director, Manager**

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While we try our best not to miss anyone, mistakes sometimes happen. If you see an error or omission, kindly email [coosbayegyptian@gmail.com](mailto:coosbayegyptian@gmail.com) with a correction.



**Preservation Association**

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